

REMARKS

Claim 8 is amended. Claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are pending in the application.

Claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are pending in the application.

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's indicated allowability of the subject matter of claims 20 and 22-26.

Claims 1-5 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-5 and 7 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Donnelly, U.S. Patent No. 6,143,658 in view of Kwag, U.S. Patent No. 6,232,228. Without admission as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, claims 1-5 and 7 are cancelled.

Claims 8-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Donnelly in view of Kwag. With respect to claims 14-19, without admission as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, such claims are cancelled. With respect to claims 8-13, independent claim 8 is amended to recite etching an opening through first and second insulative materials to expose a copper-containing material at the base of the opening. Claim 8 further recites exposing the surface to a cleaning solution formed from hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and hydrofluoric acid, where the exposing removes less than 5 Angstroms of the first and second insulative materials from sidewalls of the openings without forming divots at the interface between the first and second insulative materials. The amendment of claim 8 is supported by the specification at, for example, page 7, lines 3-14. Claim 8 is allowable over the art of record for at least reasons similar to those set forth by the Examiner regarding allowability of claim 20.

Dependent claims 9-13 are allowable Donnelly and Kwag for at least the reason that they depend from allowable base claim 8.

For the reasons discussed above, claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are allowable. Accordingly, the application is in condition for immediate allowance and applicant requests formal allowance of claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 in the Examiner's next action.

Since the present Response with Request for Continued Examination is being filed within the three month shortened statutory period for reply to the Final Office Action dated October 18, 2004, no extension fees are due.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: Jennifer J. Taylor
Jennifer J. Taylor, Ph.D.
Reg. No. 48,711